

## NOTE

### PETER ACCORDING TO THE D-TEXT OF ACTS

Since the appearance of Cullmann's *Saint Pierre* in 1952 there has been a general retreat, on the part of those who oppose the Petrine primacy, from the front-line trenches whence the defense of the key texts of the Gospels was conducted; and now prepared positions in the rear, aligned principally with the Acts of the Apostles, are being defended with a renewed vigor and with all the appearance of an improved morale. It is therefore important to take into account any new evidence that may be available, not that it will turn the scale but that it may help some at least to see that even the new positions are quite as indefensible as the old. With this in view I have examined the chief places in which, as it seems to me, the so-called Western text of Acts has enhanced the importance of Peter. At the end of this examination it will be time to estimate what bearing such a bias can have on the controversy about the position of Peter and his successors in the early Church.

To start with one of the most impressive instances, it is very interesting to find that in Acts 15:7 there is the ascription of a personal inspiration to Peter when he speaks at the Council. "Standing up, in the Holy Spirit, Peter said:" is the reading of some of the Western family, e.g., the margin of Thomas of Harkel's Syriac and Codices 614 and 257 in the Greek. This textual evidence is enough to take the reading back to the early sixth century and to Monophysite circles, in which the primacy of Peter would not have been much cherished. In D itself there is a variation of the order, but the words that ascribe inspiration to Peter are there, and this takes the reading back to the very origins of the Western text. It is not an idea that can have been deduced from what follows in the narrative; it must be explained as an addition made, from whatever source, to enhance the position of Peter. This conclusion is supported by the other Western variation of text in the account of the Council. When in 15:19 James begins to speak, he prefaces his remarks according to the D-text with the words: "I *for my part* consider." The evidence this time comes from Irenaeus, who is an habitual user of a Western text, and he is supported by Ephraem in his commentary upon Acts. This deference of James clearly goes with the heightened importance of Peter's speech that was given by the addition in verse 7. That the qualification made by James should have disappeared from the normal representatives of the Western text is no doubt due to that leveling up of texts which

was taking place all the time that codices were being copied in the early centuries.<sup>1</sup>

A small addition which accentuates the position of Peter is to be found in the Pentecost scene, where (2:14) he is described as being "the first" (*prōtos*) to speak to the crowd. This single word does not do much to magnify Peter, but it is in the nature of a fussy addition by someone who is anxious to show the reader that, although in 2:6 the glossolalia is quite general on the part of the Twelve, and although Peter then stands up to speak with the rest, he is heard first, and then the others have their turn. One could say that the addition is made on the analogy of what Peter is described as doing previously at the election of Matthias (1:15), but even so the intention of the addition is quite clear.

The Cornelius episode provides a few instances of strokes added to the picture which give the portrait of Peter a heightened relief. According to D, Cornelius has posted a slave to watch for Peter as he draws nigh to the town and has assembled his household and friends who continue to keep vigil. Then the slave sights Peter approaching and comes back with his message; Cornelius leaps out of his chair and goes to meet him, falling at his feet in the act of *proskynēsis*. This version of the episode, as Dibelius noted, has changed the scene of the encounter. In the *textus receptus*, this is placed at the entrance to the house; Peter is just going in as Cornelius comes to meet him. But with the preliminary posting of the slave and the state of vigilance on the part of the whole household, and still more with the leaping up of the centurion at his slave's report—before Peter is yet on the scene—the encounter must have taken place in the street, and the homage to Peter is that much more public than the usual account could allow it to be. Perhaps it is a reflection of the heightened importance given to Peter in this episode by the Western text that some of its Latin followers (*gigas*, *perp.*, and *teplensis*) add to the concluding verse of the episode (11:1) the words "and they gave thanks to God."

In 11:2 the text has been largely rewritten in the Western codices, and Peter is now presented as "being minded for a long time to go to Jerusalem, and calling together the brethren and strengthening them he taught them throughout their villages; and he actually went out of his way to them and

<sup>1</sup> F. C. Conybeare, in *American Journal of Philology* 17 (1896) 135-71, argued from certain phenomena of the Armenian version of the *Commentary on Acts* by Ephraem that there had existed in Greek prior to Ephraem and Chrysostom a commentary on Acts which followed a Western text and which was used by both these men. This would take us back to the third century, when, as we now know from the papyri, there was a wider diversity in texts than prevailed later.

proclaimed to them the grace of God." This is all very far from the simple statement of the *textus receptus* that he went up to Jerusalem. Weiss argued that this addition was no more than an inference from 10:48 where the people ask Peter to stop for some days, but, inference or not, the motive for the addition is again the desire to enhance the position of Peter. It could be said that the Western text is here manifesting its desire to "pair off" episodes in the history of Peter with those in the history of Paul; for at 15:41 and 16:1 there is just such a passage as this about Paul, and the word *katan-taō* is again used of his turning aside from Cilicia to visit Derbe and Lystra. Long ago F. H. Chase<sup>2</sup> noted this studied parallelism between some of the Petrine additions in Codex Bezae and the Pauline part of Acts, but he did not comment on the fact that many of the additions were to the greater glory of Peter.

The statement that Peter had taught in the villages between Caesarea and Jerusalem, as Bruce points out,<sup>3</sup> looks forward to the information that is given, also in the Western text, at 21:16, about Mnason "the ancient disciple," who is there said to be living in a village that lies on Paul's way as he goes from Caesarea to Jerusalem. It is a natural inference, which the Western text intends us to make, that Mnason was one of Peter's converts on this occasion. Blass and Salmon are cited by Bruce as concurring in this view, and, if it is sound, one can see that there is some connection between the source which looks to the glorification of Peter and that which provided more exact information about places near Jerusalem or in the city itself.

Another case of new topographical information in the Western text where Peter is the protagonist is in the story of the cripple at the Gate Beautiful. Here, in 3:11, the Western text shows a much clearer idea of the location of this gate with regard to the Porch of Solomon; for it quite correctly makes the cripple after his cure follow Peter and John *out* from the Gate (which linked the Court of the Women with that of the Gentiles) towards the Porch which lay to the east of the Court of the Gentiles. The cripple is, in this account, all the time trying to lay hold of them (present participle) as he accompanies them to without the Temple. The crowd gaping with astonishment awaits them at Solomon's Porch. The picture is much more coherent than what the *textus receptus* gives us, where it is made to appear that the man holds Peter and John at the Porch until the crowd comes up, and where there is no indication that the Porch and the Gate might be some distance apart. This greater accuracy of local knowledge on the part of the Western

<sup>2</sup> F. H. Chase, *The Old Syriac Element in the Text of Codex Bezae* (1893) pp. 25, 28, 43, etc.

<sup>3</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles* (London, 1951) p. 229.

text in a passage where Peter is concerned is paralleled by its addition of the famous words about "the seven steps" at 12:10, in the account of Peter's escape from prison at Jerusalem.

The addition at 5:15, where the Western text says that "they were set free from every sickness which each of them had," is in part an echo of what is said about Paul at 19:12. Paul's handkerchiefs are there said to rid people of their diseases, and it seems that the reviser here wished to say very much the same about Peter's shadow, lest it might be thought that Peter was in any way inferior to Paul. He repeats with a slight variation the same Greek phrase, so that there is no mistaking his intention. The broad parallelism of Luke's narrative in Acts is not to be denied; Peter and Paul both heal a cripple, both encounter a magician, both convert a distinguished Gentile, both do extraordinary cures without contact with the sufferer, both undertake journeys, both escape from prison. This is not to say that Luke is presenting the two apostles in completely symmetrical narratives, for his overriding purpose is to convey to Theophilus the providential way in which the "good news" was brought all the way from its fountainhead at Jerusalem to the Rome of the time when he had himself come to be catechized in the faith. This purpose acquits Luke of the charge of being a writer who is content to weave pretty patterns, but, while he follows out his purpose, he cannot remain free from all desire of seeing what he can do to put some order into his narrative by using the best technique he knew, that of the writers in the Septuagint in which he had steeped his mind. Thus the threefold telling of the conversion of Paul, each time with a few additions or omissions from the last time, is a familiar *OT* technique, and the parallelism of leading characters is no less.

In the story of Peter's encounter with the magician the Western text adds (8:24) that Simon, when he makes his entreaty to Peter, "did not cease from copious weeping." This might be taken as a counter to the dread effect that Paul's words have upon Elymas, but even if that is so, the intention to glorify Peter is quite plain. Another feature of the story of Paul and Elymas is perhaps borrowed to embellish the account of Peter's cure of Aeneas (9:34), where Codex perpinianus in the old Latin has, along with the Sahidic version, the addition of the words "Looking fixedly upon him, Peter said to him. . ."; the phrase is found at 13:9, where Paul is about to curse Elymas. It is also used in the *textus receptus* for Peter and the cripple at 3:4. The primary witness of the Western text, Codex Bezae, is lacking in 9:34, and so one cannot be quite sure that this addition is really on a par with the others, but the widely separated witness of texts from Egypt and Gaul is perhaps significant.

In 5:29-30, where the apostles are being interrogated by the Sanhedrin,

the Western text has put Peter to the fore, making him quite the master of the situation. "Whom must we obey, God or men?", asks Peter; and he answered 'God.' Then Peter said: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus." This makes Peter the spokesman of the apostles much more fully than he is allowed to be by the *textus receptus*, and even Codex Bezae is in confusion here, the true Western text being preserved for us by the marginalia from Thomas of Harkel's Syriac. Augustine (*Contra Cresconium* 1, 8) followed this version, and Bede noted that the Greek sentence about obeying God rather than men was in his MSS put as a question. It must be admitted that, if this Western version is the genuine report of the altercation, then the speech that Peter gives in 5:30-32 has much more force. He has asked whether they should obey God, and he continues, saying that they do, for God has raised up Jesus.

The last instance of a Western addition that favors Peter which I have observed is at 4:24, where Codex Bezae reads: "They [the assembled Christians], hearing [Peter and John] and recognizing the power of God, raised their voice. . . ." This is an ascription of divine protection to Peter and John which prepares us for Peter's later escape from prison and for the later statement that Peter at the Council spoke in the Holy Spirit. The word *energeia* used here is a favorite Pauline word, not being used in the *NT* except by him. The word used for "recognizing" is, however, thoroughly Lucan.

The general conclusion about the provenance of the Western text to which one of its most careful editors arrived was that it was "made before, and perhaps long before, the year 150, by a Greek-speaking Christian who knew something of Hebrew, in the East, perhaps in Syria or Palestine."<sup>4</sup> This same scholar did not notice any dogmatic bias in the originator of the text: "Of any special point of view, theological or other, on the part of the Western reviser, it is difficult to find any trace." The additions made by the "Western reviser" in the later chapters of Acts (i.e., in the Pauline parts) are indeed without any noticeable dogmatic bias, being mostly topographical and for the most part confined to statements about places or people near to or connected with Ephesus.<sup>5</sup> But it cannot be denied, in view of the instances here adduced, that there is some bias in the Petrine part of Acts. One must make

<sup>4</sup> J. H. Ropes, *The Beginnings of Christianity* 2, ccxlv, ccxxxiii. Elsewhere Ropes demands "an early date in the period 100-150" for the origin of the Western text.

<sup>5</sup> The passages connected with Ephesus are principally 19:1 (Paul sent to Ephesus by the Spirit); 19:9 (the time of Paul's lectures); 19:28 (the crossroads where the rioters assemble); 20:5 (the remark that Tychicus and Trophimus were Ephesians, not simply Asians); 20:18 (the length of Paul's stay at Ephesus); 18:21 (the leaving of Aquila at Ephesus); and perhaps 20:4 (the description of Timothy as an Ephesian and the native place of Gaius).

the attempt to assign this to some definite place and time in the course of Christian development.

The Western text was in existence long before the time of Irenaeus (who made use of it) and of the dispute of Zephyrinus with the bishops of Asia. It would be idle, therefore, to suppose that it was a text that had been doctored in order to supply the papacy with a weapon in that controversy. One must look to a time between the compiling of the original version of Acts and the middle of the second century. There was, therefore, at that time someone who was intent on making the position of Peter much more striking than the existing record made it. He may, as far as these additions go, have been moved to act in this way because he knew the facts and felt that the narrative before him did not bring out the true position of Peter with proper emphasis. If one held that Luke was himself the reviser of his own work, one would then have to say that he was correcting a somewhat misleading impression that his original work had conveyed. If Luke was not the reviser, then it would be open to anyone to say that the revision was tendentious and did not represent the true facts. But then, if the great bulk of the revisions, in all parts of the Acts, are corrections made in the interest of accuracy, topographical or other, it would be hard to *prove* that the additions about Peter were tendentious. It would be hard to find in the early second century a man who cunningly gained credence for himself by correcting the topographical accuracy of Luke while at the same time slipping in some tendentious dogmatic additions. The mentality of the time did not look for such tokens of plausibility, even though they might be searched for by the modern reader of an account of the belief and practices of Tibetan Buddhists. The presumption then remains that, if the additions about men and places are accurate, those that have to do with Peter are accurate also.

One might hazard the conjecture that it was the doings of Marcion at Rome which led, before 150, to the revision of Acts so as to bring out more clearly the position of the one at Rome who claimed Petrine authority against this heretic from Pontus who had founded his rival church in Rome. Valentinus, seeing that he sought the position of pope for himself, is not likely to have caused any such revision; for he must be presumed to have been in agreement with the holder of the position that it was one of the greatest importance. But in view of the many additions in the latter part of Acts which are certainly improvements in the text and which are connected with Ephesus, it is perhaps possible to suggest that it was not at Rome but rather in Ephesus that the revision was carried out. The Greek-speaking Christian, who certainly knew something of Hebrew and who produced his own Gospel last of all the evangelists at Ephesus towards the close of the first

century, devoted his last chapter to an episode which brought out the position of Peter in the Church much better than it had been allowed to appear hitherto. Could it not be that it was he, John the Apostle, who gave these final touches to Acts, at a time when that work was already circulating widely? It would thus be possible to explain the limited success of his additions. So many copies already in use would be copied in their turn and would be lacking in the additions. The anti-Roman sentiments of so many of the bishops of Asia later in the second century would lead to the neglect of these Petrine additions and of the codices which contained them. None the less, Irenaeus, who had grown up in Asia Minor, would have knowledge of them in the text that he used later in life in the Greek-speaking milieu of the southern part of Gaul, and they would survive in the Greek and old Latin MSS that we know. Such an explanation of the evidence would fit all the facts, as far as I can see them, and it is hard to think of an alternative explanation that would.

It is necessary at this point to bring some evidence that John was ever credited in antiquity with any concern for the other writers of the *NT* or for its proper transmission. In the short *Acts of Timothy*, first published by Usener in 1877,<sup>6</sup> there is a passage which credits John with this kind of activity. He is said to have found at Ephesus, on his return from captivity, some confusion about the other Gospels and, "putting into order the narratives in the three Gospels, he had them registered as Matthew's, Mark's, and Luke's, adding their proper names to the Gospels." This may be a naive account composed in the third century, but there is a sobriety and accuracy of local information about these *Acts of Timothy* not to be found in the later accounts of his martyrdom, and therefore it may not be impossible that John, while conducting some kind of scrutiny of the Gospels, retouched the text of Acts in a few places. Nowhere else in the *NT* are we presented with such a phenomenon as the existence of two rival texts which differ by whole phrases and sentences; a unique fact calls for a singular explanation, and as a working hypothesis towards the final establishment of such an explanation these pages have been compiled.

The hypothetical association of the Gospel of John with the D-text of Acts might be of some use in explaining the phenomena which can now be observed in P<sup>66</sup>. The Bodmer Papyrus, according to the careful collation of

<sup>6</sup> Hermann Usener, *Acta s. Timothei* (Bonn, 1877). This gives the (extremely short) Greek text of the Acts. A Latin version, which ascribes them to Polycrates of Ephesus (in spite of the fact that they quote Irenaeus), can be found in *PG* 5, 1364-65. Usener thought that they were composed before 356, and recent excavations at Ephesus have established the accuracy of their topography.

Dr. Aland,<sup>7</sup> shows considerable agreement with a D-type of text for John. Among 530 variants of all kinds, however minute, Dr. Aland gives the following figures for the major codices:

agreements with $\aleph$	140:	disagreements	390
agreements with B	65:	disagreements	465
agreements with W	132:	disagreements	398
agreements with D	189:	disagreements	299

Dr. Aland goes on to say that the inclination of this new papyrus to side with the D-text is not to be taken too seriously, but there are some 25 places where the papyrus has a notable agreement with the reading of D and other allied, or not altogether alien, codices. Of this number the readings at Jn 8:53; 10:10; 12:3; 12:19; 12:31; 12:40; and 14:17 are of interest, as in these the scribe of the papyrus has corrected his text away from a D-type of reading in favor of something else, indicating that he may have had access to an exemplar that was much more in the nature of a D-text than anything he has given us. The papyrus did not contain more than the single Gospel of John, and it is dated by its editor slightly earlier than the Chester Beatty papyrus of the complete *NT* which is the first *collected* Christian Scripture work that we possess. If then, at a time when the Gospel of John was still circulating in separate copies, some of these copies had a text that was somewhat allied to the type of text found in the D-text of Acts, it is possible to conclude that the D-text of Acts cannot be quite alien from the Johannine circles which saw to the transcription of the earliest copies of the fourth Gospel.

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<sup>7</sup> In *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 82 (March, 1957) 161-83.